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~ DRAGONKEEPER ~



~ KAI'S ~
RECIPE BOOK



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DISCLAIMER:

THESE RECIPES ARE, SADLY, NOT SUITABLE FOR HUMANS.
IT IS ADVISED THAT SENSITIVE CHILDREN, NATURE LOVERS
AND VEGETARIANS DO NOT READ THE FOLLOWING.



Dragons traditionally eat their food raw, but after spending some years with humans, I have acquired a taste for cooked meals. Human food can be rather dull, and I have developed my own style of cooking, which is more suited to the tastes of dragons. Here are some of my most successful recipes that other culinarily adventurous dragons might like to try.

ROASTED SWALLOW

Anyone who knows me will be aware that my favourite dish is roasted swallow. The greatest difficulty in being a dragon who likes to cook is lighting the cooking fire. You might be lucky and find a fire after a lightning strike or one abandoned by a human, but to light a fire from scratch is difficult for a dragon and something like a sheet of stiff paper or a tea tray to fan the embers into flame. It is much easier to get a human companion to light a fire for you.

METHOD

Let your fire burn down to glowing coals. Then all you need do is throw your birds on the coals. Personally, I do not bother plucking them. Most of the feathers burn off. Roast for a minute or two on both sides. A simple meal of lightly roasted bird can easily be transformed into a mouth-watering delicacy with the addition of a good sauce. Here are two of my favourites.

CATERPILLAR SAUCE

Caterpillars are an excellent basis for a tasty sauce (except for the type that ooze poisonous substances or have sharp stinging spines). My favourite are the green ones found on cabbages. They are very common, appearing as if by magic wherever a cabbage plant grows.

METHOD

Boil a mouse in some water. While that is cooking, collect at least twenty caterpillars and squash them in a bowl with a rock. Add some bitter herbs and grind thoroughly. Mix in some of the mouse stock (don't forget to remove the mouse) and set on the fire for a short while until it thickens.

BUDDHA'S BLESSING SAUCE

I have never met a Buddhist dragon, but since I am constantly reminded that it is against the precepts of a Buddhist to eat any sort of creature, even the smallest and most annoying mosquito, I suppose I should include a vegetarian sauce. Humans are fond of ginger sauce, but to a dragon's taste it is far too mild. I have a suggestion or two to improve it.

METHOD

Take a piece of ginger root about the size of a forepaw along with sixteen cloves of garlic. Chop them up very fine and fry in a little sesame oil. If you do not have any sesame oil, the fat of an ox or a bear will do. Thicken with mashed taro root. This sauce can be used with any baked bird and also livens up a bland sweet dish such as red bean dumplings. This sauce is pleasant enough, but it becomes exceptional with one addition — worms. If you are entertaining a large group of meat-eating dragons with just one annoying vegetarian, my advice is to finely grind up the worms and the vegetarian will never know the difference.

POACHED FROGS STUFFED WITH BLOWFLIES AND MUSHROOMS

Dragons do not usually like frogs, but periods of prolonged hunger, though unpleasant and potentially deadly, have one advantage — they force a dragon to be inventive and to try foods previously shunned. Thanks to a friend who likes frogs, I have developed a taste for them myself.

METHOD

Add some juniper berries and half a chopped onion to a pot of sparrow broth. Throw in a dozen or so frogs and poach for an hour. While they are cooking, lightly fry equal quantities of blowflies and chopped mushrooms. When the frogs are cooked, slit them open and insert the stuffing. Garnish with some crushed snails.

ROAST DOVE AND TURTLE EGGS

If you are looking for a quick and easy dinner and there are doves in the vicinity, you are in luck. They are very stupid birds and easy to catch. They are likely to build their nest right outside your cave, and years of plucking their young from the nest will not discourage them from continuing to do so. If you are looking for a bigger meal, you will need adult birds. Again, they are easily caught. You might find one trying to balance on a too thin branch (a task requiring all its concentration) so it can simply be snatched up. They also try and land on sloping surfaces, slip off and can be caught as they fall. You will have no trouble catching half a dozen doves in the time it takes to sneeze.

METHOD

Roast doves as per instructions for **ROASTED SWALLOW**.

Dove goes particularly well with eggs. Any sort will do — bird or snake — but turtle eggs are my favourite. They should be placed in the ashes at the edge of the fire and will cook in a few minutes. Alternatively, you can break a raw egg over the bird when it is in your bowl. The heat from the roasted bird will cook most of it.

PAN-FRIED BABY WRENS

This simple dish is quick to prepare, and makes a very good sixth course in a banquet. Baby birds are easy to acquire, as they can not fly away. Any sort will do, but wrens are delicious.

METHOD

Climb or fly up to the nest. Shoo away the parent birds. Collect the babies. Baby wrens are very small, so you may need to raid six or seven nests. Heat up some fat. When it is hot and spitting, throw in the baby wrens and toss them in the fat for no more than the time it takes to count to ten. Eat them immediately. Very juicy.

BAKED PANGOLIN STUFFED WITH MICE AND GARNISHED WITH FRIED LADYBIRDS

A pangolin is quite a large beast and has a tendency to be tough. It needs to be baked slowly for a long time.

METHOD

If you do not have access to an oven, I recommend placing the pangolin in a hole and building a fire on top of it. Such a time consuming dish should only be attempted for very special banquets. The stuffing will require at least thirty mice, but they can easily be collected in a town or city. Any seasonally available insect can be used as a garnish. For an attractive meal I recommend lightly fried ladybirds or green cicadas.

A Note on Storage

Dragons often live in remote places where food can be scarce, particularly in the colder months, so it is essential to build up a store of food for winter. Certainly you will not want to waste any meat that has been hard won in a hunt. I recommend finding a dry cave or hollow tree and hanging your meat by a length of vine or string made from twining dried grass together. Meat can be kept this way for at least six months, possibly longer. The following recipes also preserve food.

PICKLED HEDGEHOGS

This dish requires a jar of vinegar, which some dragons may find difficult to obtain. Hedgehogs are quite tasty raw, but require skinning, which can be an uncomfortable job. The spines of a pickled hedgehog are quite soft, however, and the skin peels off easily.

METHOD

Just pop the hedgehogs in the jar whole. The addition of wolfberries and cinnamon improves the flavour. A jar of pickled hedgehogs looks very attractive on a pantry shelf.

BEETLE AND MAGGOT JEWELLED HARE

I am currently experimenting with preparing meat by burying it under the earth. My early trials with this method using a hare have been very successful. The meat develops a good strong flavour and a pleasing green colour. I have seen human cooks spend a lot of time cutting slits in meat and poking in garlic or herbs for extra flavour. The real bonus of this recipe is that beetles and maggots take up residence in the meat all by themselves. So although this dish needs a lot of forethought, it requires very little preparation time.

METHOD

Bury the animal in moist earth for at least three months. Dig it up again. Wipe off some of the dirt and serve.



❧ Eat well! ❧

Kai